



DoDEA

# SAFE Schools

## NEWSLETTER



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### School Personnel Know What “Right” Looks Like

Careful record keeping is a critical component of student and staff safety. Tracking incidents helps administrators develop safety policies to reduce accidents and injuries. Chemical Hygiene programs with clearly articulated standard operating procedures can prevent accidental exposure to dangerous chemicals and toxins. A recent incident at a school in Europe underscores the importance of maintaining precise records of how schools dispose of potentially hazardous materials.



When local refuse contractors on the military installation discovered what appeared to be animal remains in a dumpster near the elementary and high schools, they contacted police immediately. “Local authorities take environmental violations very seriously and rightfully so,” explained the DoDEA safety manager. “Penalties in a case like this could include personal accountability, fines, and possible jail time.”

Local police arrived at the school with the security forces to investigate. The facility administrative officer called the science department chair to see if any staff members had recently discarded specimens. “Our biology teacher, and our Chemical Hygiene Officer (CHO), showed the local police our inventory of preserved specimens,” he said. In addition, administrators produced the schools’ standard operating procedures for disposal of biological waste and the records to prove those procedures are followed.



The safety officer noted the records, covering several years, “clearly demonstrated that we had never ordered materials of that exact type.” In addition, one official showed them the plastic lined specimen boxes, labeled “BIO WASTE” in both the local language and English. The school official who personally delivers the Bio Waste to the hospital for incineration, provided a point of contact at the hospital who produced further corroborating records.

The police were impressed. They thanked the school and took the investigation elsewhere, later identifying the culprit. “It was all over in half an hour,” recalled one official. Things could have gone very differently, however, had the school not been able to prove it was using appropriate disposal protocols. “It is too late to start an effective program when authorities come knocking,” points out the safety manager, who praised the entire school team for averting what could have been an administrative headache and even a Public Relations embarrassment for the installation. “The CHO and Hazardous Communication programs have to be a part of the culture of the school from day one.” ■

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## USO Brings Trevor Romain to Schools in Europe

This fall, inspirational humorist and children’s author Trevor Romain kicks off part two of his United Service Organizations (USO) world tour entitled “With You All the Way.” Last spring, Romain visited every military installation in the Pacific, speaking with children about life issues including bullying, handling stress, relocation challenges, deploying parents, and losing loved ones. Previously, Romain visited schools in DDESS to speak with children about bullying prevention.



The With You All the Way program supports children ages six to 18 as they contend with the unique joys and challenges of growing up in a military family. Romain offers real-life lessons for children, such as dealing with bullies, facing fears, coping with divorce, and understanding grief. The program includes Romain’s humor-laced presentations and other kid-friendly resources like cartoon videos, music, and story books designed to reinforce the twin messages of personal resiliency and community connectedness.

children over the years: “They taught me that with the right tools, they can be really resilient.”

The With You All the Way program also distributes a number of support kits for children. These kits are tailored to situations unique to military children:

While this portion of the USO tour is scheduled only for Europe, any DoDEA educators working with children who are grieving, or in need of more support during a parent’s deployment, can order additional With You All the Way comfort kits directly through Military One-Source. These kits are available to qualified personnel at no cost. For more information on the With You All the Way USO tour, visit the USO Website. ■

- ▶ Deployment – With You All the Way! Dealing With Deployment Kit.
- ▶ Injury & Reintegration – Taking Care of You! Support for Kids of Injured Heroes Care Kit.
- ▶ Moving – PCS: The Great Moving Adventure Survival Kit.
- ▶ Loss – Helping Military Children Handle Loss Grief Kit.

## Why Administrators Love October

Many of the observances devoted to keeping students safe and secure take place in October, including:

- ▶ Fire Prevention Month
- ▶ Mental Health Awareness Week (October 7-13)
- ▶ National Bullying Prevention Month
- ▶ National Cybersecurity Awareness Month
- ▶ Red Ribbon Week (October 23-31)
- ▶ Walk to School Day (October 3)

Romain, who has been leading assemblies in DoDEA since 2008, says that he has learned a lot from military

For details and ideas for school activities contact [safeschools@csc.com](mailto:safeschools@csc.com). ■

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## Double Gate System Eases Parent-Child Reunions

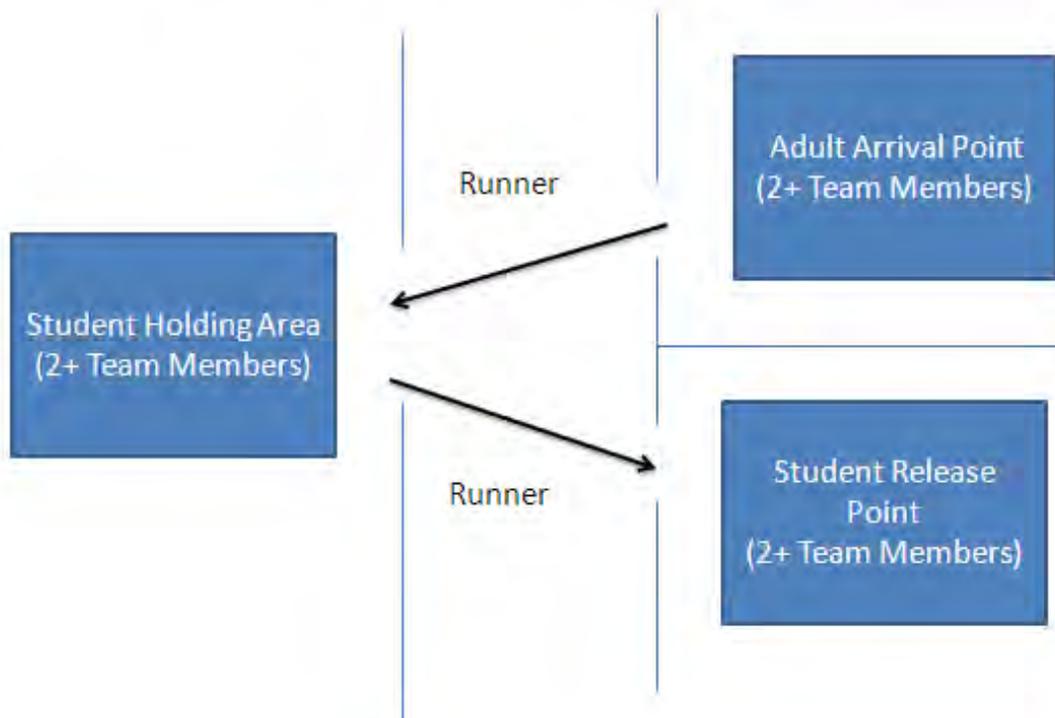
One challenging aspect of managing a school crisis involves maintaining accountability for students while reuniting them with their parents/sponsors. If the parents and children can see each other across the room at the reunification site, they are liable to rush past the school personnel and hug, making it difficult for the school to account for all students. The situation could disintegrate rapidly if some parents have to be told that their child is injured or missing and the arriving parents witness their emotional response.

Successfully reuniting parents/sponsors with their child following a school crisis hinges on using a “double gate” system. A double gate system simply means that instead of walking each child out to meet his or her parents at the sign-in table, the school arranges for a separate entry and exit point. A parent presents photo identification at the entry point and answers a few brief questions, such as: name, relationship to child, cell phone number, and destination or where they are taking the child.

The school representative at the table notes that information on a “student request card” and gives the card to a human runner. The parent/sponsor then proceeds to a second room or designated area that is not within line of site of the entry point. Meanwhile the runner takes the card to the student holding area.

At the student holding area, the school personnel find the child or verify his or her status (i.e., absent – was not at school that day, receiving first aid/medical care, missing, or sent with runner). The child, or the “request card” if the student is not available, is then taken by a second human runner to the departure point. There the school personnel confirm the proper adult is picking up the child and the parent/sponsor and child exit the area.

## Parent - Child Reunion



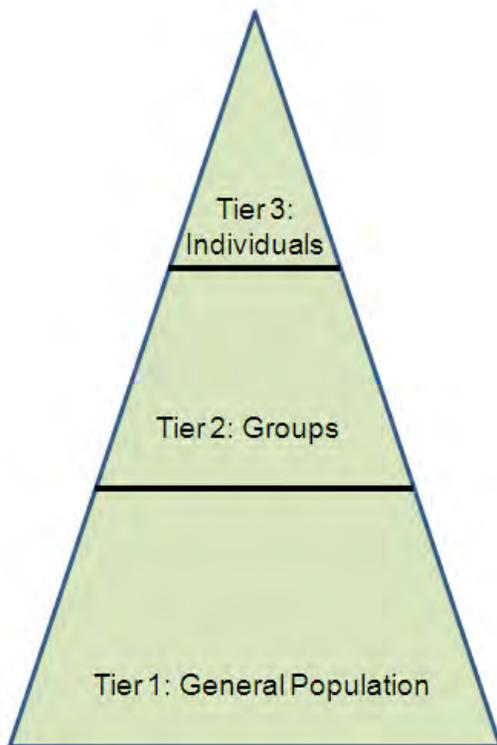
It is important to designate some personnel to keep traffic moving at the departure point. Stationing a counselor or school mental health professional at the departure point may allow them to help parents who are notified that their child is not available. Alternatively, these mental health professionals could be available in an adjoining room.

DoDEA school principals can consult their district and area safety and security officers for assistance planning reunification procedures. For additional information, examples of forms, and instructions on how to conduct a drill to practice these procedures, contact [safeschools@csc.com](mailto:safeschools@csc.com). ■

## Meeting the Challenge

School security provides the critical foundation to building and sustaining the capacity to improve conditions for learning. This was the conclusion of the national panel of education and school security experts who convened August 8 and 9, 2012, in Washington, D.C. for the 2012 U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students Conference. Presenters from around the country convened to discuss five topics: Behavioral Health, Bullying Prevention, Gender-Based Violence, School Discipline, and School Safety.

Two themes emerged throughout the conference. The first theme involved the importance of tailoring prevention programs to those tiers of the student population where they can have maximum impact. The second theme focused on addressing the needs of the whole child to support higher academic achievement.



### How to Maximize the Value of Programs

Tailoring prevention programs to the needs of each tier of the student population maximizes the use of resources and minimizes time away from learning for the majority of students. Some prevention programs are appropriate for presentation to the general population of students (Tier 1 in the accompanying graphic). For example, substance abuse education and suicide prevention programs provide effective means of raising awareness about warning signs and appropriate response throughout the school community.

More intensive interventions can be implemented with groups of students who have demonstrated a need for those programs through their behavior or learning patterns (Tier 2). Finally, there will always be a few individuals who need extensive interventions but these individuals can be supported on an individual basis or the school can refer the family to additional resources outside the school setting (Tier 3).

## Caring for the Whole Child

Increasingly, education experts are concluding that supporting students in modifying observable behaviors that detract from learning helps the entire school concentrate on academic achievement. As each child develops individual life skills, teachers spend less time addressing behavioral concerns in the classroom and everyone is better able to concentrate on learning.

The panelists agreed that addressing the needs of the whole child with effective prevention programs strengthens resiliency and enhances academic achievement. Additional information on the Meeting the Challenge conference is available from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Safe and Healthy Students at

<http://osh.s.dgimeetings.com>. ■



## Federal Partners Offer New Online Bullying Resources for Children

StopBullying.gov, the federal campaign to prevent bullying in U.S. public schools, recently added a new series of online resources for children to the already extensive Web site. The new Web pages contain games and testimonial videos from children and teenagers who have been bullied. “Webisodes” of an entertaining cartoon series feature the emotional ups and downs experienced by an innocent canine named “KB” when she is taunted by the cool cats and “mean-girl” ducks at school.

Along with the games and videos, StopBullying.Gov/Kids includes simple and clear descriptions for younger children of what is (and is not) bullying and how students typically feel when they are being bullied. By using accessible language, including terms such as “alone,” “different,” and “powerless,” the site helps children who are experiencing bullying understand that bullying is not their fault. The site reassures children that their experiences, while painful, are not unique.

This Web site is managed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control, the U.S. Department of Education, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. All of the materials and recommendations on the children’s pages of the site are compatible with the StopBullying: Take a Stand, Lend a Hand program in use by DoDEA. For a list of bullying prevention strategies for administrators, see page 6 of this issue of the Safe Schools Newsletter. The StopBullying.Gov children’s pages are available at [www.stopbullying.gov/kids](http://www.stopbullying.gov/kids). ■



## Feds Offer Simple Language for Smart Kids

While some well-meaning bullying prevention Web sites offer vague recommendations for how to handle bullying, StopBullying.gov/Kids offers children lists of discrete actions they can take to respond to bullying situations. The home page includes an eye-catching red tab labeled “What You Can Do.” When children click this tab, they receive clear instructions across a range of circumstances for how to prevent and respond to bullying. ■

A corkboard graphic with a wooden border. At the top, a piece of torn paper reads "New Kids Section" in red, bold, sans-serif font. Below this, on the left, is a photograph of three young girls smiling and hugging each other. On the right, another piece of torn paper reads "Offers Videos and Games to Teach Kids About Bullying" in white, bold, sans-serif font. Below this text is a red button with white text that says "Check it out!". The corkboard is decorated with several colorful pushpins.

## Ten Strategies for Bullying Prevention from DODEA's Stop Bullying Now Program

This month, DoDEA observes National Bullying Prevention Month with walks, assemblies, and several student-produced public service announcements designed to raise awareness of the importance of creating socially inclusive climates where all students feel safe. The Stop Bullying Now: Take a Stand, Lend a Hand program offers online resources designed to support administrators as they develop bullying prevention activities and programs within their schools. All of these resources are available through the DoDEA website.

Following are 10 best practices, identified by the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for preventing bullying in schools:

1. Create a school climate where friendliness is the accepted norm and bullying is not "cool."
2. Assess the level and types of bullying that might be occurring in the school.
3. Garner support (or buy-in) from other installation agencies, all school staff, and parents.
4. Form a group to coordinate all of the school's bullying prevention activities.
5. Ensure all school staff members are trained in bullying prevention.
6. Establish and enforce school rules and standard operating procedures for bullying prevention and intervention. (Developing simple, clear rules about bullying can help to ensure that students are aware of adults' expectations that they refrain from bullying and help students who are bullied.)
7. Place extra staff members at bullying "hot spots" in the school. (These will be determined by conducting a thorough assessment of the social climate of the school.)
8. Intervene consistently when bullying does occur. Stop Bullying Now provides a tip sheet for how administrators can intervene when they see a child being bullied at school. There are also tip sheets for parents and bystanders.
9. Devote some class time to bullying prevention. It is important to reinforce the anti-bullying message in a number of settings. Encourage parents to discuss bullying prevention at home.
10. Maintain these efforts over time. Reinforcement is crucial in creating a positive school culture.



For a complete discussion of these strategies and more resources designed to prevent bullying including a list of best practices, visit DoDEA's Bullying Awareness and Prevention Program at [www.dodea.edu/StopBullying](http://www.dodea.edu/StopBullying). As part of the federal bullying prevention campaign, The Federal Partners in Bullying Prevention have invited students to submit a video by October 14 depicting how students can be "more than just a bystander" and help create a culture of caring. Instructions for submitting videos are available at <http://stopbullying.challenge.gov>. ■



In a memo dated September 6, 2012, DoDEA Director Marilee Fitzgerald reemphasized DoDEA's commitment to bullying prevention:

"Bully prevention continues to be a top priority for Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA). To this end, I am asking that each school lead an effective and enduring school and community outreach effort to prevent bullying."